Note

Cereal Leaf Beetle (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) as a Pest of Ornamental Grasses

The adventive cereal leaf beetle, *Oulema melanopus* (L.) (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae), is distributed throughout Europe, extending into Siberia, northern Africa, and Scandinavia. It was first found in the United States in 1962 from Michigan. Since then, it has spread throughout the eastern United States. The cereal leaf beetle has been present in Maryland since 1967 (Haynes and Gage 1981. Annual Review of Entomology 26: 259–287). Since 1967, the cereal leaf beetle has been reported only feeding on small grains and corn.

The cereal leaf beetle is primarily a pest of small grains, *Avena sativa* L. (oats), *Hordeum vulgare* L. (barley), *Secale cereale* L. (rye), and *Triticum aestivum* L. (wheat), but summer adults may feed on *Zea mays* L. (corn). Reports in the European literature also list several genera of Poaceae as hosts—*Agropyron repens* (L.) Beauv. (quackgrass), *Avena fatua* L. (wild oat), *Brachypodium pinnatum* (L.) Beauv. (chalk false broom), *Dactylis glomerata* L. (orchardgrass), *Festuca gigantea* (L.) Vill., *H. murinum* L. (wall barley), *Lolium multiflorum* Lam. (annual ryegrass), *L. perenne* L. (perennial ryegrass), *Phalaris canariensis* L. (canarygrass), and *Phleum pratense* L. (timothy) (Hodson 1929. Bulletin of Entomological Research 20: 5–14; Balachowsky and Mesnil. 1953. Les Insectes Nuisibles aux Plantes Cultivees, pp. 788–795; Balachowsky. 1963. *In* Entomologie Appliqué à Agriculture, Vol. 2; Miczulski. 1973. Roczniki Nauk Rolniczych Seria E 3: 61–86; Schmitt. 1988. pp. 475–495 *In* Jolivet, P., E. Petitpierre, and T. H. Hsaio, eds., Biology of Chrysomelidae). Most of the United States literature on the cereal leaf beetle deals with small grains (Battenfield et al. 1982. Bulletin of the Entomological Society of America 28: 291–301). Wilson and Shade (1966. Annals of the Entomological Society of America 59: 170–173) tested the cereal leaf beetle on a number of grasses and found that it could feed and reproduce on *Triticum spelta* L. (spelt), *Phalaris arundineacea* L. (reed canarygrass), *Bromus inernis* Leyss. (smooth brome), *Elymus* sp. (wildrye), and *Festuca arundineacea* Schreb. (tall fescue). Castro et al. (1965. Quarterly Bulletin-Michigan State University Agricultural Experiment Station 47: 623–653) also found that the cereal leaf beetle could reproduce on *Setaria italica* (L.) Beauv. (foxtail millet).

On 9, 10, and 20 May 1996 I observed adults and second and third instar larvae of the cereal leaf beetle feeding on ornamental varieties of *Phalaris arundinacea* (ribbon grass) in three separate nurseries in Calvert and St. Mary's Counties Maryland. Also, cereal leaf beetle adults were found feeding on *P. arundinacea* in a landscaped garden in Anne Arundel County on 2 June. Two varieties of *P. arundinacea* were attacked—'Picta' and 'Strawberries and Cream'. Feeding damage by the beetle was typical cereal leaf beetle damage. Adjacent ornamental grasses in the genera *Chasmanthium* (sea oats), *Miscanthus,* and *Pennisetum* (fountain grass) were not being fed on.

Voucher specimens are deposited in the Maryland Department of Agriculture collection. Maryland Department of Agriculture Contribution Number CN 96-96.

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